b) expressing said receptor or portion thereof under conditions permitting specific binding of said compound to said receptor or portion thereof;

c) exposing said cell to a sample suspected of comprising said compound; and

d) detecting the presence of any compound specifically bound to said receptor or portion thereof,

thereby determining whether said compound specifically binds to said receptor or portion thereof.

~~40.~~ 29 The method according to claim 39, further comprising the steps of preparing a cell extract from the cell transfected with said nucleic acid molecule, isolating a membrane fraction of said cell extract, and contacting said sample with said membrane fraction under conditions permitting binding of the compound to said fraction.

~~41.~~ 30 The method according to claim ~~39~~ 28, wherein said detecting is performed by monitoring a change in the signaling activity of said CCR5 chemokine receptor or portion thereof.

~~42.~~ 31 The method according to claim ~~39~~ 28, wherein said detecting is performed by monitoring the acidification rate of said host cell.

~~43.~~ 32 The method according to claim ~~41~~ 30, wherein said detecting is performed by monitoring the level of intracellular calcium in said host cell.

~~44.~~ 33 The method according to claim ~~41~~ 30, wherein said detecting is performed by monitoring the stimulation of an intracellular cascade.

~~45.~~ 34 The method according to claim ~~41~~ 30, wherein said detecting is performed by monitoring the level of inositol triphosphate.

~~46.~~ 35 The method according to claim ~~39~~ 28, wherein said compound is an agonist of CCR5.

~~47.~~ 36 The method according to claim ~~39~~ 28, wherein said compound is an antagonist of CCR5.

~~48.~~ 37 The method according to claim ~~39~~ 28, wherein said at least one ligand is selected from the group consisting of RANTES, MIP-1α, and MIP-1ß.

~~49.~~ 38 The method according to claim ~~39~~ 28, wherein said cell is selected from the group consisting of CHO-K1, HEK293, BHK21, and COS-7.

~~50.~~ 39 The method according to claim 39, wherein said cell is exposed to said sample suspected of comprising said compound, in the presence of a ligand for the CCR5 receptor.